

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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R 261536Z OCT 76
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 NICOSIA 3370

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD; USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CY
SUBJECT: COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND THE 1976 GREEK CYPRIOT ELECTIONS

1. SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS: GREEK CYPRIOT HOUSE ELECTIONS SEPT 5 DO NOT IN OUR VIEW SIGNAL A SHIFT TO THE LEFT POLITICALLY OR A GROWTH IN COMMUNIST AND LEFTIST INFLUENCE IN CYPRUS. DESPITE THE CRITICAL ROLE THAT THE MOSCOW-DOMINATED COMMUNIST AKEL PARTY PLAYED IN SECURING CLEAN SWEEP OF ALL 35 HOUSE SEATS BY PRO-MAKARIOS POPULAR FRONT AND THE PRESUMED POLITICAL DEBTS THUS INCURRED ON THE LEFT, MAKARIOS REMAINS FIRMLY IN CONTROL, UNRIVALED IN INFLUENCE AND CLOUT, FULLY ABLE TO MAINTAIN POLITICAL BALANCE
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OFFORCES, CONTAIN OR EXPLOIT COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AS HE SEES

FIT, AND MOVE IN ANY POLICY DIRECTION HE DEEMS DESIRABLE. AKEL HAS NOT INCREASED ITS CORE STRENGTH (ABOUT 25-30 PERCENT OF CYPRIOT VOTERS), ITS OVERALL VOTING STRENGTH WHEN IN A PRO-MAKARIOS COALITION (ABOUT 35-40 PERCENT), ITS REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE (9 SEATS), OR ITS CHANCES OF GAINING CABINET-LEVEL POSITIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND-- AND IMPORTANTLY SO -- AKEL HAS REAFFIRMED ITS POLITICAL STRENGTH; DEMONSTRATED ITS ABILITY TO DELIVER VOTES AND DECISIVELY INFLUENCE ELECTION OUTCOME; AND DEFT OPEN ITS OPTIONS REGARDING THE PROFILE AND ROLE IT WANTS TO PLAY IN A POST-MAKARIOS CYPRUS. END SUMMARY.

2. AKEL ELECTORAL STRENGTH

A. AKEL'S PARTICIPATION IN THE POPULAR FRONT COALITION AND CROSS-PARTY VOTING MAKE IT DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO SEPARATE AKEL VOTES FROM THOSE OF ITS COALITION PARTNERS (LYSSARIDES' PSEUDO-SOCIALIST EDEK AND KYPRIANOU'S GENERALLY CENTRIST AMALGAM OF MAKARIOS SUPPORTERS KNOWN AS THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT). STATISTICALLY, IT IS POSSIBLE TO SHOW THAT 64 PERCENT OF ALL VOTERS CAST AT LEAST ONE BALLOT FOR A COMMUNIST IN THE 1976 ELECTIONS COMPARED WITH ROUGHLY 40 PERCENT IN THE 1970 ELECTIONS. WE DOUBT VERY MUCH, HOWEVER, THAT THIS REFLECTS A GENUINE INCREASE IN COMMUNIST SUPPORT BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE ELECTION: VIZ., COALITION WAS A TACTICAL ELECTORAL ALLIANCE ESTABLISHED WITH MAKARIOS' CLEAR (IF PUBLICLY UNSPOKEN) BLESSING; FAITHFUL WERE INSTRUCTED THAT VOTES FOR AKEL AND EDEK WERE VOTES FOR MAKARIOS; AND PERCEPTION WAS WIDESPREAD THAT THE ELECTION WAS ABOVE ALL ELSE A REFERENDUM ON MAKARIOS AND HIS LEADERSHIP, NOT A CHOICE BETWEEN RIGHT AND LEFT. B. STATISTICAL DIFFICULTIES NOTWITHSTANDING, WE JUDGE THE COMMUNISTS' CORE STRENGTH TO BE 25-30 PERCENT OF CYPRIOT VOTERS AND THEIR VOTING STRENGTH, WHEN BENEFITING FROM VOTES FOR MAKARIOS THROUGH MEDIUM OF AKEL, TO BE 35-40 PERCENT. THIS DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE AN INCREASE OVER PAST COMMUNIST VOTING STRENGTH. LYSSARIDES' EDEK -- WHICH IS NOISIER AND MORE MILITANT THAN THE ESTABLISHMENT LEFTIST PARTY AKEL, BUT NOT TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY -- APPEARS TO HAVE INCREASED ITS ELECTORAL STRENGTH SLIGHTLY TO ROUGHLY 10 PERCENT. C. THESE CONCLUSIONS ARE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS: FIRST, IN THE 1959 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, THE ONLY TIME AKEL WAS RASH ENOUGH TO OPPOSE MAKARIOS (SUPPORTING CLERIDES' FATHER

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JOHN), IT RECEIVED ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. PRESUMABLY, IN THE FAR MORE PROSPEROUS CYPRUS OF TODAY (DESPITE 1974 DISLOCATIONS), AKEL'S CORE SUPPORT HAS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED. SECOND, KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS HAVE TENDED TO ZERO IN ON THE RANGE OF PERCENTAGES NOTED ABOVE. COMMUNIST LEADERS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THEIR INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS REPORTEDLY SET THEIR VOTING STRENGTH IN SEPTEMBER ELECTION AT 35-40 PERCENT. GOC SOURCES, WHICH HAVE AN INTEREST IN MINIMIZING COMMUNIST STRENGTH WHEN SPEAKING WITH

WESTERN DIPLOMATS, PUT AKEL ELECTORAL STRENGTH AT 25-26 PERCENT WITH ADDITIONAL 10 PERCENT FOR EDEK. GREEK EMBASSY USES FIGURE OF 30-32 PERCENT FOR AKEL, 10 PERCENT FOR EDEK, 25 PERCENT FOR CLERIDES, AND 30-33 PERCENT FOR KYPRIANOU. SAVVY BUT SEEDY MAKARIOS CRONY ANDREAS AZINAS (COMMISSIONER OF CO-OPERATIVES, SECRET PROCURER OF WOMEN AND ARMS FOR ARCHBISHOP IN THE PAST, AND HIS POLITICAL HATCHETMAN) SETS AKEL CORE STRENGTH AT 25-28 PERCENT AND ITS VOTING STRENGTH WHEN IN PRO-MAKARIOS COALITION AT 35-38 PERCENT. NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER AND FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER NICOS KOSHIS ESTIMATES THAT AKEL VOTE AT 30-35 PERCENT AND EDEK AT 8 PERCENT.

3. COMMUNIST STRENGTH IN THE HOUSE.

A. COMMUNIST STRENGTH IN THE HOUSE HAS NOT CHANGED, AS AKEL DECIDED TO CONTEST ONLY THE SAME NINE SEATS IT CONTESTED AND WON IN THE 1970 ELECTIONS AND TO SUPPORT POPULAR FRONT CANDIDATES FOR THE REMAINING SEATS IN THE 35-MAN HOUSE. ANY ATTEMPT BY AKEL TO FIELD ADDITIONAL CANDIDATES WOULD HAVE RISKED COALESCING

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ANTI-COMMUNIST FORCES AND DESTROYING POPULAR FRONT SUPPORT FOR AKEL. EDEK, BY CONTRAST, HAS INCREASED ITS REPRESENTATION FROM TWO TO FOUR SEATS BUT THE ADDITIONAL TWO SEATS WERE WON AT THE EXPENSE OF TWO LEFTIST, MAVERICK DEPUTIES OF THE NOW-DEFUNCT PROGRESSIVE FRONT. COMPLEXION OF THE HOUSE, THEREFORE, HAS BEEN RECAST BUT NOT CHANGED IN TERMS OF LEFT-WING INFLUENCE. THIS POINT IS FURTHER UNDERScoreD BY FACT THAT AKEL IS STILL REPRESENTED IN THE HOUSE BY THE SAME GRAY, UNINTELLECTUAL GROUP ELECTED FIRST IN 1970.

B. CENTER AND CENTER-RIGHT FORCES IN THE HOUSE HAVE UNDERGONE A SIMILAR RECASTING AND, IN APPEARANCE IF NOT IN FACT, ARE MORE COHESIVE NOW THAT KYPRIANOU'S DEMOCRATIC FRONT WITH ITS 21
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SEATS HAS AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY. (IN THE OLD HOUSE, CLERIDES' UNIFIED PARTY HAD ONLY 15 SEATS AND RELIED ON VOTES FROM INDEPENDENTS AND PROGRESSIVE FRONT FOR A MAJORITY). KYPRIANOU HAS BEEN AT PAINS SINCE THE ELECTION TO EMPHASIZE THAT HE IS IN NO WAY BEHOLDEN TO THE COMMUNISTS FOR THEIR ELECTORAL SUPPORT, AND HIS PARTY'S CONTROL OF THE HOUSE SHOULD IN THEORY MAKE HIM ABLE TO RESIST POSSIBLE COMMUNIST PRESSURES TO MAKE THE POPULAR FRONT INTO MORE THAN JUST A TEMPORARY ELECTORAL MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE. WHETHER HE CAN RESIST SUCCESSFULLY REMAINS TO BE SEEN; HOWEVER, SINCE THERE ARE CENTRIFUGAL TENDENCIES WITHIN KYPRIANOU'S PARTY WHICH MAKE HIS AND ITS FUTURE UNCLEAR. KYPRIANOU IS A LACKLUSTER POLITICAL HACK AND MAY NOT BE ABLE TO KEEP HIS PARTY TOGETHER; MANY IF NOT MOST OF DEPUTIES OWE THEIR PRIMARY ALLEGIANCE NOT TO KYPRIANOU BUT TO MAKARIOS AND AZINAS; POLITICALLY AMBITIOUS TASSOS PAPADOPOULOS, APPARENTLY WITH MAKARIOS' TACIT BLESSING, IS ALREADY TALKING ABOUT FORMING A NEW PARTY WHEN THE DF CRUMBLES FROM WITHIN; AND IT IS AN OPEN SECRET THAT SIX OR SO OF DEPUTIES HAVE PLEDGED THEIR SUPPORT TO TASSOS WHEN AND IF DF DISSOLVES.

C. FINALLY, IN CONTEMPLATING LEFT-RIGHT BALANCE IN THE HOUSE, IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT THE CYPRIOT HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IS A VERY WEAK BODY WITH FEW POWERS AND LITTLE INFLUENCE ON THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS. IN OUR JUDGMENT, THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO POSSIBILITY OF THE COMMUNISTS' GAINING A CABINET-LEVEL POSITION BUT IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL (ADVISORY BODY OF POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS PLUS GREEK CYPRIOT NEGOTIATOR) AKEL WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE A FORUM IN WHICH TO PRESENT ITS VIEWS ON NATIONAL POLICY.

4. COMMUNIST INFLUENCE.

A. IF THE ELECTIONS HAVE BROUGHT THE COMMUNISTS NO GENUINE GAINS, NEITHER HAVE THEY BROUGHT ANY LOSSES. ON THE CONTRARY, AKEL BY A LOW-PROFIEL POLICY (WHICH INCIDENTALLY SEEMS TO COINCIDE WITH EURO-COMMUNIST OBJECTIVE OF DEMONSTRATING THE POSSIBILITIES OF COOPERATION WITHOUT PERIL) HAS: 1) CONSOLIDATED COMMUNIST POSITION, PROVING ONCE AGAIN THAT AKEL IS A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH AND IN THE PROCESS ILING UP POLITICAL I.O.U.S; 2) KEPT ITS OPTIONS OPEN REGARDING ITS FUTURE ROLE AND PROFILE, PARTICULARLY IN A POST-MAKARIOS ERA; 3) HELPED PRECIPITATE CLERIDES INFO FRANK OPPOSITION TO MAKARIOS AND PREVENTED FORMATION OF A BROAD CENTER-RIGHT ALLIANCE BASED ON THE COOPERATIVES, PEK
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RIGHT-WING FARMERS UNION, AND SEK TRADE UNION AS CLERIDES HAD EARLIER CONTEMPLATED; AND 4) KEPT ON TRACK A STEADY BUT UNOBTRUSIVE EXPANSION INTO KEY POSITIONS IN THE CYPRIOT BUREAUCRACY, IN THE ECONOMY AND THE COOPERATIVES, IN REFUGEE AND WELFARE GROUPS, AND IN VILLAGE AND MUNICIPAL POSTS.

B. MAKARIOS REMAINS THE SOLE ARBITER OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY IN CYPRUS AND IS LIKELY TO REMAIN SO AS LONG AS HE IS POLITICALLY ACTIVE. WHILE MAKARIOS IS PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF MOVING LEFTWARD IF HE DEEMS IT ADVISABLE (AS HE DID IN THE PRE-1974 PERIOD WHEN UNDER PRESSURE FROM EOKA B AND THE JUNTA), THERE IS NO PRESENT INDICATION THAT HE IS WILLING OR FEELS THE NEED TO REPAY COMMUNIST SUPPORT WITH A POLICY SHIFT TO THE LEFT, A LARGER COMMUNIST VOICE IN DECISION-MAKING, OR A LARGER ROLE IN GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL. IN THIS REGARD, EXTENT TO WHICH COMMUNIST DEMANDS FOR A "NATIONAL COALITION" REPRESENTATING ALL POLITICAL FORCES, FOR PURGE OF "PRO-COUP ELEMENTS IN CIVIL SERVICE, AND FOR EARLY LOCAL ELECTIONS (WHICH MAKARIOS WANTS DELAYED) ARE MET WILL BE BELLWEATHERS OF COMMUNISTS' INFLUENCE AND THEIR ABILITY TO CASH IN ON MAKARIOS' PRESUMED POLITICAL DEBTS TO THEM.

5. FACTORS LIMITING COMMUNIST INFLUENCE

A. MAKARIOS REMAINS THE CHIEF OBSTACLE TO INCREASE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN CYPRUS. BOTH HE AND THE COMMUNISTS, WHO CAREFULLY AVOID CRITICIZING HIS BEATITUDE, KNOW THAT AS MUCH AS 10 PERCENT OR EVEN 15 PERCENT OF THE COMMUNISTS' ELECTORAL STRENGTH COULD EVAPORATE AT THE DROP OF A DAMNING WORD FROM ON HIGH. MAKARIOS, FOR HIS PART, IS ESSENTIALLY A CAUTIOUS (IF OPPORTUNISTIC) CHURCHMAN WHO RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WEST TO CYPRUS, THE DANGEROUS COUNTER-REACTIONS THAT A VISIBLE SHIFT TO THE LEFT COULD ENGENDER, AND THE FACT THAT THE COMMUNISTS, FOR ALL THEIR OSTENSIBLE SUPPORT, ARE RATHER UNRELIABLE BED-FELLOWS. IN THIS REGARD, GREEK PRIME MINISTER KARAMANLIS'

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REPORTED INJUNCTION TO MAKARIOS (DURING THEIR MEETING IN AUGUST)
THAT NO COMMUNIST SHOULD SERVE IN THE CABINET ACTS AS A FURTHER
CONSTRAINT.

B. THE ESSENTIALLY CONSERVATIVE NATURE OF CYPRIOT SOCIETY,
WHICH HAS LITTLE APPARENT DESIRE OR CAPACITY FOR RADICAL SOCIAL
CHANGE, AND THE DISTINCTLY BOURGEOIS, STATUS-QUO-ORIENTED NATURE
OF AKEL'S OWN LEADERSHIP AND POLICIES ARE FURTHER CONSTRAINING
FACTORS. MUCH OF AKEL'S STRENGTH DERIVES FROM ITS DEMONSTRATED
ABILITY TO "DELIVER" THE ECONOMIC GOODS AND SERVICES WITHOUT
APPEARING TO THREATEN EXISTING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORDER.

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C. LYSSARIDES' EDEK SERVES A FURTHER CHECK ON UNDILUTED AKEL DOMINATION OF THE LEFT. YOUTHFUL, MILITANT, AND WITH FEW ECONOMIC OR BUREAUCRATIC STAKES IN CYPRIOT SOCIETY, EDEK IS A NATURAL COMPETITOR OF THE MORE "ESTABLISHMENT"-ORIENTED AKEL AND SEEMS TO BE ATTRACTING YOUNGER ELEMENTS AWAY FROM THE COMMUNISTS. MAKARIOS IS WARY OF LYSSARIDES BUT FINDS HIM USEFUL AS A STALKING HORSE (FOR IDEAS AND BARBS HE HIMSELF CANNOT VOICE) AND HIS PARTY USEFUL AS A COUNTER-WEIGHT TO AKEL. SOVIETS, WHO ARE SUSPECTED OF HAVING LINKS WITH EDEK, MAY ALSO FIND EDEK A CONVENIENT MEANS OF KEEPING AKEL IN LINE AND GIVING IT AN APPEARANCE OF RESPECTABILITY.

D. FINALLY -- FROM THE CYPRUS VANTAGE-POINT -- SOVIET INTERESTS IN THE AREA

MAY WORK TO PREVENT A LOCAL COMMUNIST POWER GRAB WHICH COULD UPSET THE DELICATE POLITICAL BALANCE IN CYPRUS AND PROVOKE A COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE REACTION FROM TURKEY, THE U.S., AND THE WEST IN GENERAL. SOVIET CALCULATIONS OF THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF ALLOWING OR ENCOURAGING A HIGHER POLITICAL PROFILE FOR AKEL COULD OF COURSE CHANGE. THE SOVIETS CERTAINLY RETAIN THAT OPTION, GIVEN AKEL'S STRONG SHOWING IN THE ELECTION, ITS DISCIPLINED ORGANIZATION, AND ITS QUIET EXPANSION THROUGHOUT THE BUREAUCRACY. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS SEEM TO FIND THE PRESENT SITUATION TOLERABLE AND EVEN COMFORTABLE AND TO HAVE ORDERED A WAITING GAME WHILE MAKARIOS IS STILL AROUND. DILLERY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, POLITICAL SITUATION, COMMUNISTS, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 OCT 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NICOSI03370
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760400-0797
From: NICOSIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761017/aaaaaopt.tel
Line Count: 358
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 APR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND THE 1976 GREEK CYPRIOT ELECTIONS
TAGS: PFOR, CY, GR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006